Sandy Hollow WMA ***WMA Species Management Rx***

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AREA DESCRIPTION

Sandy Hollow WMA is located 10 miles northeast of Amite, LA in the northern portion of Tangipahoa Parish. The WMA consist of 4,282 acres of rolling hills found in all or portions of Sections 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, and 38 of T2S, R8E, Sections 4, 5, 10, 11, 15, and 16 of T3S, R8E, and Sections 6 and 7 of T3S, R8E.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Sandy Hollow WMA was historically dominated by an open grown, old-growth longleaf pine savannah. Timber harvests prior to LDWF ownership has resulted in a relatively young longleaf pine forests with little mature timber remaining. Loblolly pine has invaded many of the longleaf stands and stem density is well above the optimum stocking for wildlife species associated with the historic forest type. Longleaf pine stands which have received consistent prescribed fire consist of broom sedge and blue stem understory with scattered hardwood including blackjack oak, black cherry, and bluejack oak. Creek bottoms and drains are composed of mixed hardwood dominated by water oak. To improve habitat conditions on Sandy Hollow WMA, 489 acres where treated in the summer of 2014 consisting of 9 units located on the north and south tracts. The areas treated received a commercial timber harvest to reduce stem density to 50-60 square feet of basal area.

Wildlife

Sandy Hollow WMA is managed for upland wildlife with bobwhite quail designated as the keystone species. Managing forestlands for quail emphasizes an open midstory which benefits red-cockaded woodpeckers, Bachman's sparrow, brown-headed nuthatch, red-headed woodpeckers, yellow-throated warblers, and pine warblers. This management also emphasizes the use of fire to enhance habitat quality by inhibiting woody growth, promoting annual plant communities, and increasing bare ground on the forest floor. The forest structure and plant communities produced following prescribed fire enhances habitat for gopher tortoise, prairie warbler, wild turkey, and other fire dependent wildlife. These historic longleaf savannah species thrive in patchy, open grown longleaf systems with basal area less than 60 sqft/acre, limited midstory, and herbaceous understory.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve habitat for bobwhite quail, gopher tortoise, and other grassland species on the maximum acreage possible
- Promote longleaf pine ecosystem
- Reduce stem density
- Create heterogeneous forest canopy
- Increase grass and forb production
- Reduce loblolly pine and loblolly pine encroachment

Methods

Operator Select (747 acres)

- Target basal area of 30-40 ft^2
- Leave dominant and codominant stems
- Favor longleaf and shortleaf pine
- Prejudicially target loblolly pine and hardwood stems for removal

Individual Select (436 acres)

- Target basal area of 40-60 ft^2
- Mark leave trees with one slash of paint at eye level and one at ground level
- Enhance patchiness by marking with variable retention
- Favor longleaf and shortleaf pine on upland sites by targeting loblolly pine
- In hardwood bottoms thin hardwood and retain enough loblolly pine to facilitate prescribed burning

Shelterwood (327 acres)

- Remove or sever all stems except longleaf and shortleaf pine within boundary
- Establish 12-foot permanent fire break around the perimeter of all shelterwood units to facilitate immediate prescribed burning
- Evaluate residual longleaf stocking post-harvest and supplement if necessary

Concerns

- Rare species of concern
- Limit soil disturbance and erosion

Treatments

To provide and enhance habitat for open pine wildlife species several commercial timber harvests are prescribed across the entire WMA. The proposed treatment is an aggressive step toward fulfilling the wildlife habitat management objectives of the WMA which are: to promote a longleaf pine ecosystem and to provide habitat for bobwhite quail and other grassland species on the maximum acreage possible.

The operator selection method will be utilized on upland longleaf sites in stands with higher than acceptable stocking. Longleaf and shortleaf pine stems in the dominant and codominant crown position will be retained at a target basal area of 30-40 square feet. During harvesting operations all loblolly pine and hardwood stems will be targeted for removal. Harvesting contractors will be directed to vary the intensity of thinning across each treatment unit in order to provide for a heterogeneous canopy. Variations in canopy cover along with proper prescribed burning will provide for the development of a patchy and more complex understory.

The individual selection method will be utilized within a 155-acre unit in compartment 3 and in several mixed hardwood / pine drains across the WMA. Within the compartment 3 unit, longleaf and shortleaf pine will be marked for retention while loblolly pine is targeted for removal. Stems will be retained at an average basal area of 40-60 square feet with emphasis on marking areas both well above and well below the target density. As with the proposed operator selection harvest method, this variability will ensure the desired patchiness of the overstory and the resulting understory. Most of the midstory present will be removed during harvesting operations.

The shelterwood method is prescribed in areas which are dominated by loblolly pine with varying amounts of longleaf present. Within these treatment units, all stems will be cut except longleaf and shortleaf pine. Merchantable timber will be removed while pre-merchantable stems will be severed. Upon the completion of harvesting operations, longleaf stocking will be evaluated and low-stocked areas will be planted with longleaf seedlings. The objective of this treatment is to convert stands which have experienced

significant loblolly encroachment to longleaf pine stands. In addition, a 12-foot permanent fire break will be bladed to bare mineral soil around the perimeter of each shelterwood unit. This practice will facilitate immediate prescribed burning and aid in future management of each unit.

An intensive gopher tortoise burrow search will be conducted before harvesting operations commence and all burrows within treatment area will be conspicuously marked. Harvest operations will be closely monitored to limit any threat to gopher tortoise on Sandy Hollow WMA. It is recommended that no harvesting operations take place during the month of October on the northeastern portion of the North Tract (specifically compartment 3) or within the Natural Area of the South Tract (specifically compartments 8 and 9) to limit disturbance and potential danger to gopher tortoise within the these proposed treatment units. The remaining treatment units may be harvested at any time provided burrows have been located and clearly marked by LDWF Natural Heritage staff.

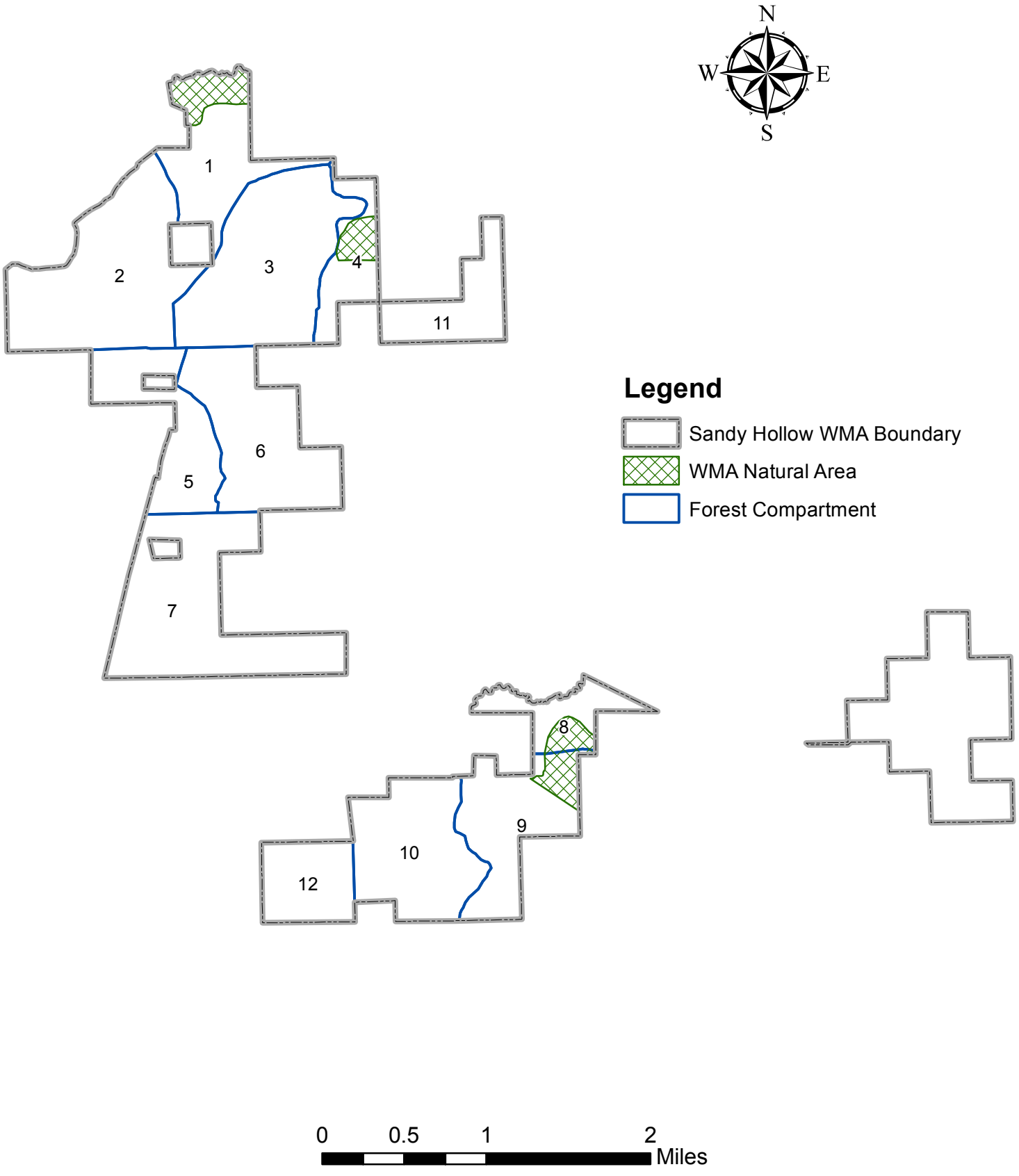
Logging Requirements

- No harvesting equipment within **25 feet** of marked burrows
- No tops left within 6 feet of base of live trees
- Disperse skid trails to minimize damage to herbaceous community
- No harvesting during wet periods
- No harvesting during the spring turkey season or firearm seasons for white-tailed deer
- All logging slash should be redistributed throughout treatment area
- Follow Louisiana BMP guidelines at all times
- Limit soil disturbance

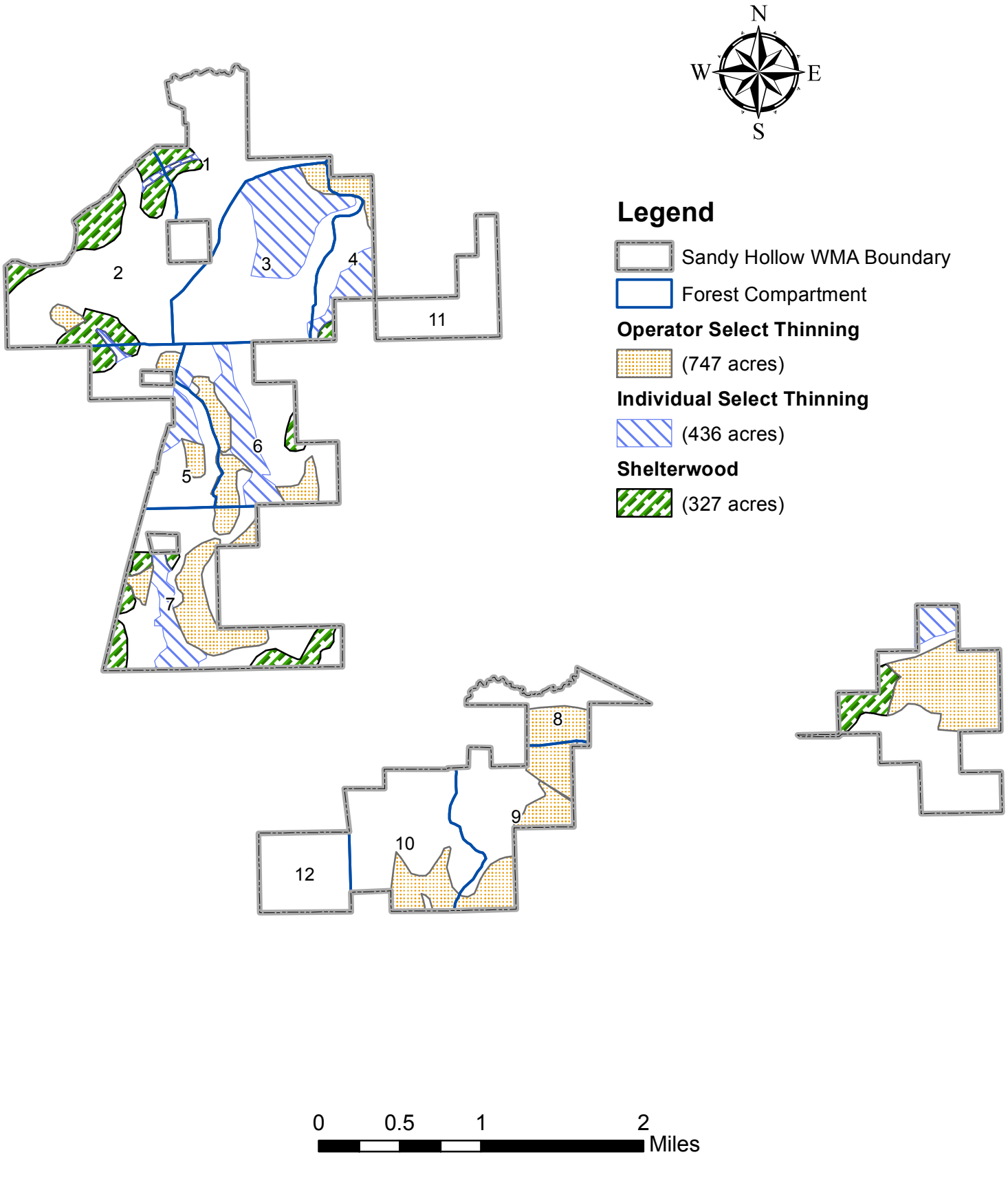
Additional Entry Requirements

- Re-entry as necessary to monitor stand development

Sandy Hollow WMA Forestry



Sandy Hollow WMA
Proposed Treatment Rx



Sandy Hollow WMA Forestry
Past Treatments

sale_num	treatment_	acres	date_	comments
73-1-87	individual selection	1	1987	salvage cut along road
73-2-103	shelterw ood	30	2004	
73-2-103	individual selection	82	2004	
TSI	chainsaw TSI	20		
TSI	chainsaw TSI	23		
TSI	chainsaw TSI	65		
TSI	chainsaw TSI	12		
TSI	chainsaw TSI	8		
TSI	chainsaw TSI	51		
TSI	chainsaw TSI	42		
73-3-114	clearcut	3	2014	<Null>
73-3-114	individual selection	340	2014	thinned to 50 BA/ac, operator select
73-3-114	individual selection	100	2014	thinned to 60 BA/ac, operator select
73-3-114	individual selection	45	2014	cut trees marked